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The following gentlemen have since been appointed members of the Executive Committee: Mr. ERASTUS C. BENEDICT, Chairman, Messrs. ANDREW WARNER, W. J. HOPPIN, FREDERICK A. COE, BENJAMIN H. JARVIS, and the President and Treasurer, *ex-officio*.

PROGRAMME OF THE PRESENT YEAR.

The large engraving for the members of 1851, will be executed by Mr. ALFRED JONES, after WOODVILLE's celebrated painting of *Mexican News*, in the possession of George W. Austin, Esq. This painting was exhibited for several months in the Gallery of the Art-Union, where it was greatly admired. It represents a group gathered around the porch of a country inn and post-office, listening to the reading of a newspaper, which contains an account of one of the battles in the late war with Mexico. A more particular description of the painting is rendered unnecessary by the etching which accompanies the present number, and which, although intended to give an idea of the general effect only of the piece, shows the skill with which the artist has discriminated the characters and feelings of the persons represented. The slouching bar-keeper, the tavern-haunting scape-grace who finds something in the news to arouse him from his ordinary indifference, the deaf man, the exultant boy who is swinging his cap in the back-ground, and the poor old negro upon the steps, are all treated with extraordinary fidelity to nature.

The subject of this print is perfectly AMERICAN in its character, and this peculiarity is preserved in each of the FIVE ADDITIONAL PRINTS, which are to be distributed among the members of 1851, and which will form the *second part* of the GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART. The first part has met with such a cordial reception wherever it has been seen, that the Committee of Management have not hesitated a moment in deciding to continue it the present year. It is entirely unique in its character, such an enterprise never having been undertaken in the country before. It is proposed to present in this work from year to year engravings of the most celebrated American pictures. The series for 1850 contained specimens of the styles of DURAND, COLE, LEUTZE, EDMONDS, and WOODVILLE. The issue for the present year will be made up from the works of MOUNT, WOODVILLE, RANNEY, KENSSETT, and CROPSEY, viz:

1. MOUNT's *Bargaining for a Horse*, in the possession of the New-York Gallery of the Fine Arts, and considered by many to be the best picture of the Artist.
2. WOODVILLE's *Old '76 and Young '48*, representing a young American officer recounting his adventures to his old grandfather, a revolutionary veteran.
3. RANNEY's *Marion crossing the Pedee*, a scene taken from the history of the partisan campaigns in the South, embracing a large number of figures, and the most successful work of its author.
4. KENSSETT's *Mount Washington*; and
5. CROPSEY's *Harvesting*, two American landscapes of rare beauty, which have never yet been exhibited, but will attract universal admiration whenever they shall be seen by the public.

One of the great advantages of this set of prints is, that they may be preserved conveniently in a portfolio without framing, or bound in a book. Such persons as were not members of

last year, who may desire to have the first part of the *Gallery of American Art*, may obtain it by taking an additional share in the distribution of 1851.

Each member will also be entitled to such numbers of the BULLETIN as may be issued during and after the month in which his subscription shall be paid.

The proposed changes and improvements in the literary matter and embellishments of this journal for the year 1851, form the subject of the introductory article in the present number, to which we refer the reader.

The collection of Paintings and Sculptures will be still more attractive than that of last year. It will contain a greater number of drawings in water colors than have hitherto been included in our Catalogue. The Committee feel the importance of encouraging this branch of Art, which has not received the attention in the United States that it deserves. A number of specimens have already been obtained not only of landscape views, but of figure compositions, which will be displayed at the opening of the Gallery, in the course of the present month. Among the oil paintings purchased, may be found a charming illustration of the ballad of the *Babes in the Wood*, by PEEL, of which we hope to furnish a wood-engraving in the next number; a landscape composition by CROPSEY, embracing the *Temple of the Sibyl* at Tivoli, which is the subject of one of our engravings for this month; *Hamlet and Ophelia*, by Mrs. LILY MARTIN SPENCER; a composition by E. JOHNSTON, one of the young American artists in Düsseldorf, whose crayon drawing of the *Chimney Sweeps* was much admired in our gallery last year: landscapes by WHITRIDGE, MULDER, HUNTINGTON, and others: a characteristic work by EDMONDS, four pleasing pictures by CHAPMAN, and several other paintings of much interest and value.

THE HISTORY, PLAN, AND POSITION OF THE AMERICAN ART-UNION.

The example of the London Art-Union in the Fall of 1838 suggested to a few gentlemen in New-York the possibility of doing something for art in a similar manner in New-York. It was obvious to all that it might not be practicable to do here what was easily done in London, the great metropolis of an old compact and populous nation, with its schools of art, its artistic history and renown, and its artistic monuments; with its great public galleries, and annual exhibitions of modern art, and its population of 1,500,000 addicted to the most expensive gratification of their cultivated and refined tastes. In spite of difficulties and doubts, it was, however, finally determined that an effort should be made to form an association that should have for its purpose the patronage of artists and the cultivation of the people, by means of a periodical exhibition of pictures by good artists, ancient and modern; a permanent gallery, and the annual purchase of American works of art, to be distributed among the members of the association. The funds were to be provided by the receipts at the exhibitions, which were to be free to members only, and by annual subscriptions of five dollars; each subscriber indicating whether his means should be devoted to the purchase of

pictures for distribution, or for a permanent gallery; those contributing to the permanent gallery having no share in the distribution.

The association, under the name of the Apollo Association, commenced its career with high hopes and encouraging zeal. The purchase of paintings for distribution was by its first constitution the primary object, and the production of an engraving was contingent and secondary. It was soon found, however, that few subscribed to the permanent gallery, and that there was danger that the mere purchase of a few pictures and the distribution of them by lot, would be so much like a lottery as to be offensive to many good citizens, if not to the laws,—would be sustained by a spirit of gambling rather than the love of art,—and that it could not be highly useful, nor hope for continued success.

It was accordingly determined, after one year's experience, to submit the institution to the Legislature, by a request that it might have the sanction of law, which was given by an act of incorporation in 1840. It was also determined that after a suitable amount of the funds should be invested in paintings for distribution, an engraving should be produced, of which a copy should be given to every member.

The exhibitions, while they were all that we desired in character, greatly disappointed us in the receipts; and our funds, small at best, were so diminished by expenses that little was left to be divided between even a cheap mezzotint engraving and the purchase of a few paintings. The country subscriptions did not increase, and the city list was with difficulty kept up. Convulsive but ineffectual efforts were made to rally the people and the public press in favor of the institution. The committee of managers at their own expense prepared a costly entertainment, to which the press and the friends of art were invited, that, being brought together, their sympathies might be excited in favor of art. Not one soul came to cheer the committee in their thankless labor! Their pictures for distribution were only six! The committee was discouraged, and at the next annual election they declined to be re-elected, with the exception of one or two, who still had faith that there was there a germ which was destined to burgeon and to grow, and they, together with their new associates, determined that a vigorous effort should be made to infuse new life into the institution; to give it a name and character, and usefulness, which should make it in the best sense a national institution; and they never doubted that they should, sooner or later, succeed.

It was resolved to abandon the exhibitions, which had cost, the last year, \$2000 more than their receipts. The subscriptions to a permanent gallery, which in three years had amounted to only \$150, were also discontinued. Office-rent was stopped, and for a time we were indebted to the public spirit of a popular and liberal bookseller (Mr. Francis), who allowed the committee gratis to hold their meetings in the literary parlor of his bookstore. Each member of the committee pledged himself to procure by personal solicitation a certain number of new members, and thus, with our savings, a real increase of funds to the amount of near \$4000 was made. We therefore resolved to give to the subscribers, instead of a meagre mezzotint print, a fine line engraving.

The new zeal of the committee, further economies, and the brightening prospects of the institution, greatly extended its influence, and as a first step towards that complete success to which they looked, and to give to the institution a more national air, its name was changed to that which it now bears. And under the name of the AMERICAN ART-UNION all the efforts of the committee have been directed to making it in every respect a National Institution, adapted to the feelings, tastes, and circumstances of the people, and appealing to their national pride and sympathies. From that time to this the public favor has given us its annual reward, and by a rapid and unexampled growth its income has risen to more than \$80,000.

As the members had always been assured in our annual publications, so the result has shown that as our members have increased so have our benefits, in a still greater ratio. The certain returns to every member have been multiplied threefold, while his subscription has been the same; and our beneficial influence upon American art has even more increased. Our thousands of members now swell our lists, that they may have these annual certain returns—their contingent interest in the distribution, is but an incident to the working of a certain and regular system of permanent and equal benefits.

It is interesting to contrast the present with the past, of only ten years ago. Then our only local habitation was the bookseller's office; next came a small office, in which a few pictures were hung, as they were purchased; and from that has come, by steady gradation, our present galleries, and offices, and store-rooms, making an aggregate length of 360 feet, and of the width of 25 feet, devoted solely to our business and pictures.

Necessity, then, compelled us to give up the exhibition of paintings, one of the greatest means of improving and cultivating the public taste, and of encouraging and teaching the artist himself; now our long galleries are filled with the best productions of modern art among us, with many of the choice works of the foreign schools, and night and day they are thronged by thousands from all parts of the country, who come and go at pleasure, without charge.

We then gave to each member a small and cheap mezzotint print, now we give to every one a large, expensive and valuable line engraving—an honor to art any where; and five smaller ones, each one of which is worth more than some produced by the London Art-Union in its most prosperous year,—to be continued annually as a gallery of American art.

As the members and others began to look into our office, to look at our pictures, a small catalogue was printed on a slip of paper for their convenience, and that has grown to be our present Bulletin,—a valuable literary Journal, devoted to the cause of art, containing the transactions and business of the institution, and made interesting and valuable by numerous illustrations, which is furnished gratis to every member.

In addition to these returns to our members, scattered throughout the whole nation, and doing, no one can tell how much good to the cause of art, think of what we have done otherwise! How many engravers we have employed, and what stimulus we have given to that beau-

tiful art among us. Medallurgy was unknown here; now beautiful medals in honor of heroes and statesmen and artists, the pride and glory of the republic, are produced only since this institution took the responsibility of encouraging—of establishing indeed—in this country that ancient and interesting branch of commemorative art. And we are now doing the same for another ancient branch of art, in employing the best talent that can be obtained to produce original bronze statuettes.

Without the purchase of paintings, painters must seek other employment, or starve; there can be no galleries, no exhibitions, no artists. In 1841, the institution purchased six pictures and one bust, costing together \$1059! Last year we distributed 500 paintings and statuettes, and 500 medals, costing \$43,120; and the institution has purchased works of art since its organization from 257 artists, residing in 45 different cities and towns, and in 15 different States of the Union.

One of the best means of encouraging American art is to give to our artists the means of studying and practising their art in the midst of the productions of the great masters of other lands, that they may come back loaded with the spoils of time in that cultivation which ministers to our instruction and gratification, and contributes to the national glory. During the brief period of our existence—a large part of which was a mere struggle for life—we have paid more than \$17,500 for the works of American artists abroad—to twenty-eight artists from the cities of Boston, Hartford, New-York, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Washington, and Mobile.

All this general benefit, this promotion of the fine arts in the United States, is an immense patriotic gift to the nation from the members of this association within the last twelve years; and what has it cost them? At first, we were compelled to admit that our members must make sacrifices to promote the cause of art in joining this institution; now, it is not too much to say that each of the three dividends to all the members—the Large Engraving, the five numbers of the Gallery of American Art, and the Illustrated Bulletin, are each worth the five dollars paid for all! saying nothing of the free galleries, and the share in the distribution, which to many members are of no value. The committee are themselves amazed at the success which has rewarded their labors. From one end of this great nation to the other—on the Atlantic and the Pacific—from the Gulf to the Lakes—there is hardly a city or a village that through this institution has not practically an Art-Union of its own, which employs the best artistic talent, collects the choicest American productions of the burin, the chisel, and the pencil; the literary varieties, and the appetising gossip of a large Art-Journal, and delivers them all at the doors of its members! And in all the great foreign schools there may be always found deserving artists who look for a part of their support to the American Art-Union. Our original purpose has been more than threefold accomplished.

This success has been an exceeding great reward, and has more than compensated us for the attacks which envy and malice and disappointment have directed against us, and which have hitherto been harmless. In the

early days of the institution, when it was not easy to find paintings in which to invest our little funds, we bought every thing at the highest price; we then gave no offence to artists, but we soon stimulated production, so that we were overwhelmed with the trashy productions which our own action had called into being; and it began to be doubted, in the committee-room, whether we were not doing more harm than good. Discrimination was necessary, and a more fastidious regard to actual merit. Our readers need not be informed how soon and how angrily artists of no merit complained of us for buying the pictures of those who had little merit and the less labored productions of those who had much merit. The committee make no pretensions to infallibility, and have often knowingly, and, as they believe, wisely, purchased paintings of little merit, but a glance at the loads which they have been compelled to reject, has always been enough to vindicate the action of the committee in this regard so far as reasonable persons are concerned. But the unreasonable and the malicious have in some instances caused their attacks to be published hundreds of miles from us in newspapers that we never see, and where the character of the committee is not that complete protection which it is here, where they are known.

They have attacked our expenses—the gross amount of which is large, and to many may seem enormous, but to those who are familiar with such operations, they are not large. A business with near 1000 agencies, collecting an income of from \$75,000 to \$100,000 in sums of five dollars; whose postage account, even at the present rates, is more than \$1000 a year; which must keep in constant employment most reliable and trustworthy employees; which must print and advertise extensively; and must put up and dispatch thousands monthly of Bulletins and pamphlets, and hundreds on hundreds of boxes of engravings and paintings for every part of the nation,—cannot be carried on with small expenses.

They have attacked our management; they have said the business is managed by a *clique*—a popular word often used without meaning, and without cause. If it means that in the committee of management there are some who give more attention to its business than others, it is undoubtedly true of this, as of every other institution; but when we say that during the twelve years of its existence it has had five presidents, six treasurers, four corresponding secretaries, six recording secretaries, and seventy-five members of a committee of twenty-one, it will be perceived that rotation in office has given as much change as is consistent with good management.

And the Plan of the Institution, which has been so successful, has also been made the subject of complaint by some, who insist that the plan of the London Art-Union should be adopted. That institution, it is well known, differs from ours in this, that it distributes by lot, sums of money of unequal amount, subject to the condition that they be invested in paintings on exhibition in one of the great exhibitions in London, at the artist's price. If the amount be less than the price of the picture, the difference must be made up by the prize-holder; if more, it is forfeited to the institution. This plan assumes that the prize-holder is better able to judge than

the committee (which may be true)—that his choice, thus restricted, will do more for art, than purchases by the committee without restriction—that the committees who admit paintings to exhibitions are more reliable than the committee of the Art-Union—that the artist in his studio, with his partiality for his own works, is better able to fix their price than others, who are familiar with the works and the prices of all—it makes the institution, so far as encouraging painting is concerned, a mere collector of money, to be expended by no one knows whom, for no one knows what. This plan is less liable to objection in such a city as London, and such a country as Great Britain.

Our Institution was incorporated, and has been successfully managed with a view to the promotion of the arts in the United States, and the whole country is actually the sphere of its influence. In any one of the 500 towns and villages of from 1000 to 10,000 people, remote from the great cities, what inducement is it to offer one chance in a hundred of having \$50 cash, which must be lost unless—within a specified time—it be invested in a picture—on exhibition in some far-off city—whither the party never goes—subject to the risk of finding no picture near that price—or at any marketable price, and of having the choice made by a stranger, under no matter what influences of interest or favoritism? Nothing less than the most stringent conditions and the most argus-eyed suspicion can prevent such a system from dwindling into the most pernicious and dishonest gambling, and arrangements of collusion, misrepresentation, and downright fraud; and if the fortunate (?) holder of a prize should be permitted to spend his money, at his discretion, with any artist, for any pictures, how much of it would not go for family portraits to the nearest and cheapest painter of portraits? How much of it would go to any beneficial purpose of promoting art in its proper sense? How much of it would go to strengthen the timid steps of the friendless son of genius in his early studies? How much to minister to the necessities of meritorious but unknown strangers? How much to stimulate the highest efforts of art among us? How much to sustain the self-reliant and ambitious young American that, depending upon his pencil for bread to eat, and raiment to put on, has gone to find in the academies and instructions of foreign schools and studios the means of his highest cultivation, and his surest contribution to his country's glory?

It is easy to say that a sum may be set aside to support artists abroad, but will our members agree to it? Who shall select the beneficiaries, and when chosen, will they go as charity scholars? Will they do honor to our choice, or will they make our bounty a means of foreign travel simply, and come back with a little broken Italian—the mustachio—the affected voice and the mincing gait of a carpet dandy, to arrogate superiority over their fellow-artists, who have nothing but their merits to recommend them. Is it not better to do as the American Art-Union does, allow them to support themselves by their works, which can be done only by industry and study, and that deep devotion to their art which never fail to meet their reward.

On any other plan than ours, where shall we get the attractive free gallery, which can only come with a large income, and a large number of paintings annually, giving constant novelty and

freshness. Indeed, the first great want in giving a national encouragement to art is a large annual income—large enough to be felt every where; to give benefits every where; to give confidence every where. Nothing less than a very large income can ever give to the members a large actual return for their contributions, after giving to art an encouragement fourfold greater than the same amount of money could give in many separate amounts, all devoted to the same object. The secret of art-union encouragement is found in the immense economies which result from large amounts and large numbers.

To engrave and keep in order a plate for 20,000 copies, will not cost twice as much as it does for 500. The paper in large quantities at wholesale prices; the printing of engravings, which can keep a large press constantly at work, can be done at much less than for a few copies. The Bulletin with its illustrations does not cost for 20,000 copies five times as much as for 500. All that our immense establishment costs us in rent, would be required to give us room for one-quarter of our business. Now our employees devote themselves to the business for the whole year, to the utmost of their industry, and we should hardly require less if we had but half the members.

It is unnecessary to go more into detail; we have no readers whose intelligence will not suggest to them the manifold advantages which result from great numbers, and the facilities resulting from the manifold conveniences of a great city.

The American Art-Union was incorporated for the purpose of promoting the Fine Arts in the United States, and it is to that enlarged and generous purpose we are to direct our efforts, and devote our means. It is a duty requiring judgment, discretion, forecast, and review,—the adaptation of efficient means to desirable and national ends. The law, for wise purposes, it is presumed, provided that the directors of the institution should not be professional artists,—that no professional jealousies or partialities might disturb its councils, embarrass its action, fix its prices, or confine its arrangements to one art, or favorite artists, or its efforts to one mode of encouragement.

It requires a plan which embraces all the sisterhood of the fine and commemorative arts, and which cares for the promising student as well as for the artist of established reputation and popular favor, not only buying their works, but in buying also judging them, and in buying them together offering, to all—examples for study—subjects of criticism—and objects of admiration. Our plan, therefore, offers the following characteristic advantages:—

1. To all artists an opportunity and a place to present their works for sale and for exhibition.
2. To the committee, abundant means of comparison in making their selections.
3. A collection of American art, for the examination and gratification of the members and strangers.
4. To artists, the means of study and comparison, which nothing less than juxtaposition can fully secure.
5. Actual purchases, by a committee familiar with the subject, unrestricted as to galleries, or exhibitions, or individuals, or subjects.
6. The best means of encouraging American artists abroad.

7. The means of furnishing to all our members a valuable art-journal.

8. It is much more popular and acceptable to the people, and thus secures a much larger amount of money.

And in addition to these, so peculiar to itself, it has all the advantages of any other plan with which the committee are acquainted.

There is yet another subject to which we must advert. Within a short period past, the institution has sometimes been spoken of as a lottery, with a view to injure its usefulness. Those who have observed our course, cannot fail to have observed that we have constantly labored to keep free from any such just imputation. As soon as we found that any of our agents presumed to treat the Art-Union as in any sense a lottery, and to lend their countenance to lotteries and raffles, little or great, the committee issued a circular to all, announcing that those who should be in any manner mixed up with such things, must withdraw from their official connection with this institution.

One great example of disposing of an old stock in trade by lottery, which assumed a name like ours, not because ours was a lottery, but because it was not, and they hoped thus to escape the imputation and the notice of the legal authorities, was allowed to go to its maturity; and from that, and not from us or our acts or plan or purposes, sprang a kind of lottery, which has of late been too rife; and none can be more averse to such petty gambling for pecuniary gain than the committee of the Art-Union. They foresaw the evil at the time to which we have alluded, and would have prevented it, if their motives would not have been misconstrued.

Those who have read what we have here written cannot fail to see that our institution is not a lottery in any usual, legal or moral sense. We associate for the promotion of the fine arts, a useful, national, patriotic purpose: by the economies resulting from very large numbers, we are enabled to pay all expenses; cause large plates to be engraved, taking years to engrave them, at an expense of thousands of dollars each, and to furnish a copy of the print to each member. There is no lottery in this. To cause to be engraved each year five other plates of less size, and to furnish a copy of each of them to every member also. There is no lottery in this. To publish monthly a large, valuable Art-Journal full of interesting and instructive reading, and ornamented with valuable original illustrations, and of this too, every member receives every number till the end of the year. There is no lottery in this. This is the mode in which we directly encourage the art of engraving, and indirectly those of painting, sculpture, and design, in doing honor to the works from which the engravings are made, and by disseminating every where a knowledge of art, and a taste for its better productions, which soon drives away those coarse and abominable prints with which uncultivated taste offends the eye in places of public resort and private ornament. The committee perceive that medallurgy is unknown among us, and that from its nature, individual patronage can never bring it in, and their duty is plain to do something for it. They cause dies to be engraved and medals to be struck, successively, of the eminent painters of our own country. Thus we build up that art

directly, and indirectly encourage that of painting, by recording the immortality of those who deserve it. We do the same to sculpture in bronze, by producing statuettes. There is no lottery in this. It would, however, be a waste of the funds of the association to give a medal or a statuette to every member. The art is encouraged more, much more, by making the die or the mould, and striking a few hundreds, than it would by striking thousands. It is therefore our duty to produce but few copies, as we have always done. And, the great art of *painting*, how shall we directly encourage that? We must buy the paintings. There is no other way practicable. The artist must live by his art. It would be of no use to give him money if his paintings were to lie hid. So then, with what funds are left, after all our other purposes are answered, we purchase paintings in such manner, at such price, with such selection, and such criticism, as, under all the circumstances, will in our opinion, best promote American painting. There is no lottery in that. The Institution has thus a few hundred medals of equal value, a few dozen statuettes of equal value, and a few hundred paintings of greatly unequal value, no one of any of which is divisible, and they are the property of 16,000 persons. Shall these works of art be hidden from all eyes in vaults and store-rooms? They can perform their mission of good, only by being looked at, studied, criticised, admired; and so we exhibit them to all alike, for weeks, and months, freely. There is no lottery in that. But all cannot see them—thousands are at great distances—the encouragement of this art ought not to be confined to New-York—and when these works must give place to new productions and purchases, how can they be justly and impartially scattered through the country, and made the separate property of individual members, and so long as they endure be daily ministers of taste, of instruction, and of pleasure to families and neighborhoods? They must draw lots for them, there is no other mode practicable; and there is no lottery in this. It is a partition, a mere division among the owners of what cannot otherwise be enjoyed either jointly or separately.

Lotteries are forbidden by law and morals, but no rule of law, morals, or religion, prohibits or discountenances drawing lots for the necessary and useful purpose of a just partition. The laws of New-York are very stringent against lotteries, and have been so for many years, but so confident were the founders of the Art-Union that there would be no legal objection to a division by lot—and there were eminent lawyers among them—that, without hesitation, they adopted that mode, incorporated it distinctly into their constitution, published it in every mode, solicited subscriptions, and publicly performed all their operations from the autumn of 1838 to the winter of 1840, when they as confidently applied for legislative sanction, and, with that constitution in actual operation, were incorporated with ample powers to continue to exercise the same functions and to form such constitution as might be desirable. The constitution was then amended and readopted, with the provision that "*the works of art purchased during the year shall become by lot, publicly determined, the property of individual members;*" and the institution continued its operations in the most public manner till 1844, when the char-

ter was again brought before the Legislature, and was amended by giving it its present national name, and enacting that "the distribution of works of art belonging to the association, provided for in the constitution, shall take place on the Friday before Christmas;" thus most distinctly ratifying and sanctioning the distribution. And again, in 1847, an important amendment was made to the charter by the Legislature of that year. Thus three several Legislatures, at intervals of three or four years, have legalized our proceedings and distributions—distributions taking place annually, in the most public manner, in the presence and under the care of the public authorities, and heads of police of the cities of New-York and Brooklyn. How idle it is to say that thus created, fortified, and protected by law, we violate the prior law which provides that no person unauthorized by law shall draw any lottery, game, or device of chance, by whatever name it may be called, for the purpose of exposing, setting to sale, or disposing of any houses, lands, tenements, or real estate, or any money, goods, or things in action. And those who suppose that the drawing lots is either the purpose, or the attraction of the institution, would soon find, if it were nothing but a lottery of paintings, that instead of 16,000 members, there would not now be, and never would have been, 1600 members. The quiet attractions of art are of another kind. It is they that bind together our great multitude. Taste is the angel that drives the money-changers from the temple of the mind, and petty gambling comes soonest under its whip of small cords. It has often interested us, in looking over our list of associates, to see the numbers of that gentler sex whose purer tastes and gentler influences make so much of the beauty of life—the number of the sacred ministers of religion, and of the educated classes generally, that honor our lists—and to see, by the language, the look, the demeanor, that polish of the soul that shines out to the surface, in the humble as well as the high, of those with whom our thronged galleries, our correspondence, and our business brings us in contact—and to us it seems impossible that our institution can have an immoral effect. We would as soon think the administration of justice immoral because jurors are drawn by lot, or that government should be exploded because senators and judges, and other public officers, are necessarily assigned their periods of office by drawing lots.

We have said more than we desired to say on these subjects, but the occasion of communicating with all our members seemed, under the circumstances, to call for a full historical view of our proceedings, that our true position might be known to our friends.

THE OPENING OF THE GALLERY.

The Gallery of the Art-Union is to be opened to the Public about the 20th of the present month.

Visitors will be struck with the fine group in marble, *The Minstrel's Curse*, which is the most conspicuous object in the centre of the larger hall.

The Committee are indebted, for the exhibition of this work, to the courtesy of its author, Mr. CHARLES MULLER. We republish a few lines from the description we gave of it in the last October number of the

Bulletin. The story is as follows: two minstrels, one a grey-headed man, and the other a boy with golden ringlets, have played before a king celebrated for his cruel and blood-thirsty disposition. Their song touches the hearts of all who hear it, excepting the king. The courtiers forget their frivolity, the soldiers their blasphemy, and the queen throws down as a mark of her approbation, the rose she wears in her bosom. The king thereupon starts up in jealous rage, and drawing his sword pierces the younger minstrel's heart. His companion bears him forth from the presence of the brutal monarch, and pausing at the gateway, dashes his harp against a marble column, while he utters a curse upon the castle and the murderer. The artist has represented this malediction. The old man is standing with his head thrown back, his right arm extended above him, and his countenance convulsed with wrath, while with his left hand, he grasps the arm of the boy, who sinks dying at his feet. The figure of this youth is full of pleasing forms, and displays in a very touching manner the languor of approaching death. This is suggested not only by the drooping head and relaxed limbs, but also, with great truth to nature, by the rose from which the fingers of the right hand have released their grasp, signifying that he to whom it had been given, is now unconscious of all earthly honors. In the distribution of rewards by the French Government to the artists in 1849, a medal of the second rank was given to Mr. Muller for this group. He is a German, but has been residing in Paris as the pupil of the celebrated David d'Angers.

By the politeness of CHRISTOPHER WOLFE, Esq., the Committee are enabled to exhibit a collection of copies of several distinguished Italian pictures. We may here suggest that our citizens would render a very acceptable service to the cause of Art, by depositing in the Gallery for a few weeks in the spring and summer, before the purchases of the Association have become numerous, any works of value they may possess, either by foreign or native artists. Experience has shown, that pictures may be hung here with perfect safety, notwithstanding the crowds that visit the rooms, and great pleasure and benefit may be afforded both to amateurs and artists, by thus giving to them the privilege of inspecting choice work, which would otherwise be nearly inaccessible.

We desire to direct the attention of visitors to the *Children in the Wood*, by PEEL, the fine circular landscape by CROUSEY, a wood-cut of which ornaments the present number, Mrs. SPENCER's *Hamlet and Ophelia*, Mr. EDMONDS' *Preparing for Christmas*, Mr. CHAPMAN's four pictures, and the collection of works painted by the members of the Academy for the benefit of that Institution. All these paintings, with many others of value, have already been purchased for distribution among the members of the present year.

TO THE MEMBERS OF 1850.

The distribution of the Engravings among the members of 1850, will probably be commenced on the first day of May next, and will be made as nearly as possible in the order of the receipt of subscriptions. A more particular announcement will be given in the next number of the Bulletin.